

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/980,419
Reply to Office Action dated November 30, 2005

Remarks:

Applicants have read and considered the Office Action dated November 30, 2005 and the references cited therein. New claims 35 and 36 have been added to further distinguish over the prior art. Claims 3, 6-8 and 22 have been amended and claims 12, 15-18 and 26-34 have been cancelled. Claims 3, 6-10, 19-25 and 35-36 are currently pending.

In the Office Action, claims 31-32, 33, 3, 6-10, 12, 19-20, 22-25, 34, 15, 26, 27, 16, 17, 18, 28, 29 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 for failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Office Action states that it is not clear where the specification supports 15 to 60 grams per square meter basis weight of the paper, as being the weight after impregnation. The claims as currently pending do not state that the weight of the paper is the weight after impregnation. Applicants assert that there is full support for the claims as currently pending.

Claims 31-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jaisle et al., in view of Applicants' admission of the state of the art in the application. Claims 31 and 32 have now been cancelled. Applicants assert that the rejection is moot. In addition, claims 34, 15, 26, 27, 16, 17, 18, 28, 29, 30 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jaisle et al. in view of Applicants' admission and further in view of Mehta. All of the rejected claims have been cancelled. Applicants assert that the rejection is moot.

Claims 33, 3, 6-10, 19, 20 and 22-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jaisle et al., in view of Applicants' admission of the state of the art, further in view of Mehta and further in view of Koutitonsky et al. and Scher et al. The Action asserts that Koutitonsky teaches impregnation of paper with a saturant by the use of a size press that has two rollers that transfer a coating material to a paper that passes through a nip between the rollers. Applicants assert that Koutitonsky is directed to a different field of application. Koutitonsky is

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directed to the production of container board rather than decorating paper for tile. Moreover, the Koutitonsky reference does not teach or suggest acrylate-containing dispersion or mixture with the range of paper weight recited in new claim 35. The container board is directed to a much heavier type of paper and as the present invention is directed to a very lightweight paper utilized with decorative tiles. In addition, the Jaisle reference does not teach using an acrylate-containing dispersion or mixture pressed into the paper. In Jaisle et al., the acrylic resin is applied through an impregnation bath as stated at column 5, lines 28-30. The paper sheets are then dried in an oven. The pressing step with a double belt press in the Jaisle reference is not part of the method of manufacturing paper. Rather, in the production of laminates in Jaisle, pressing occurs only after the impregnation step. Laminates are produced by pressing the papers between heated belts of a double belt press.

In the method according to the present invention, the acrylate-containing dispersion or mixture is pressed into the paper and not painted on (See page 4, lines 16-18). The present invention provides for utilizing an acrylate-containing dispersion with very lightweight paper and improved application that is neither shown nor suggested by the Jaisle reference or any combination of the relevant prior art. Moreover, the method recited in claim 1 is not possible with the cited prior art. As the method recited in claim 35 provides advantages and superior product over the prior art, including Jaisle, Mehta, Koutitonsky and Scher, Applicants assert that claim 35 patentably distinguishes over the prior art. Applicants further assert that the claims depending therefrom are also believed to be allowable for the reasons discussed above as well as others.

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A speedy and favorable action on the merits is hereby solicited. If the Examiner feels that a telephone interview may be helpful in this matter, please contact Applicant's representative at (612) 336-4728.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.

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PATENT TRADEMARK